

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Case File No. AA-71439
AK-040-03-EA-018

Applicant: Dick Gunlogson

Type of
Action: Special Recreation Use Permit (Outfitter/Guide)

Location: T. 50 S., R. 82 W. and T. 51 S., R. 83 W., Seward Meridian, excluding Alaska
U.S. Survey 11719

Prepared By: Douglas Ballou

Preparing
Office: Bureau of Land Management
Anchorage Field Office
6881 Abbott Loop Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Date: September 26, 2003

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action:

The Anchorage Field Office (AFO) has received an application from Dick Gunlogson (AA-71439) to conduct guided big game hunts on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands within Guide Use Area (GUA) 09-30. This type of service is needed to meet the anticipated public demand for guided services that provide safe recreational opportunities in remote or inaccessible locations in this area of Alaska.

B. Conformance With Land Use Plan:

The BLM has not developed a land use plan for the public lands in the Aleutian chain area. However, this environmental analysis assesses the impacts of the Proposed Action and provides a basis for a decision on the proposal, 43 CFR 1610.8 (b)(1).

C. Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, Policies, Plans or Other Environmental Analyses:

A special recreation permit (SRP) is required for commercial recreation use including big game guiding on public land and water pursuant to 43 CFR 2930. Under this regulation, an applicant may be authorized to conduct commercial recreation activities on BLM administered land. The Authorized Officer may issue SRPs for five years subject to annual authorization. The permittee must satisfactorily meet the requirements associated with the SRP as well as conform to applicable laws and regulations on all other Federal and State administered lands and water.

Under State law a person must have a State of Alaska Guide Outfitter license to outfit and guide. Each outfitter is limited to three GUAs per year.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE

A. Proposed Action:

Mr. Gunlogson is the owner of the David River Lodge, which is near Liesko Point or approximately 60 miles northeast of Cold Bay, Alaska. He has guided in this area consecutively since 1966. He is a licensed Master Guide/Outfitter. His lodge is located near two small sections of BLM managed land (T. 50 S., R. 82 W. and T. 51 S., R. 83 W., Seward Meridian). Portions of this land may be utilized for Mr. Gunlogson's guiding business. Mr. Gunlogson plans to guide approximately 12 hunters annually for brown bear, caribou, wolf and wolverine. He also may conduct incidental ptarmigan hunts, fishing for local species, beach combing and photography. Gunlogson plans to commence guiding activities after May 1 and cease no later than November 1 each year and will observe established

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) hunting seasons and regulations for all species listed above.

All operations on BLM land will be accessed by plane landing on an existing airstrip or adjacent beach. All hunts will be performed on foot from that point. Mr. Gunlogson plans to establish temporary spike camps on the beach or adjacent to the airstrip consisting of no more than two tents accommodating a maximum of three people at one time. Waste holes will be dug to handle human waste. He also seeks to occasionally utilize an existing old cabin on the beach as a temporary shelter. Mr. Gunlogson will adhere to "Leave No Trace" practices and will remove all elements of the temporary camps when not actively using the area.

Gunlogson Enterprises will employ five to six registered guides depending on the species and the time of year. Generally, the big game hunting will take place in the spring and fall months according to the ADF&G State regulations, and typically last ten days.

- B. No Action Alternative:
The No Action Alternative would be to not authorize the use of public land to conduct commercial big game guiding on BLM administered land.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

- A. Critical Elements:
It has been determined that the following Critical Elements of the human environment are either not present or would not be affected by the Proposed Action or the No Action Alternative:

Air Quality
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)
Environmental Justice (EJ)
Farm Lands (prime or unique)
Floodplains
Invasive, Non-Native Species
Native American Religious Concerns
Subsistence
Water Quality (Surface/Ground)
Wetlands/Riparian
Wild and Scenic Rivers
Wilderness

1. Cultural Resources:
No cultural resources are known for this area, however, this area has not yet been inventoried for cultural resources. The possibility exists that there are unreported sites in the area. In adjacent areas where cultural

resource surveys have been conducted, clusters of sites have been found which range from the historic period to prehistoric sites several thousands year old.

2. Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species:

The only known animal T&E species in the area of the Proposed Action are Stellar's and Spectacled Eiders, which may not be hunted and are protected by ADF&G regulations. These species may be found infrequently in spring and fall migration in or near shore areas of the coast.

No T&E plants are known to exist in the area.

3. Wastes, Hazardous and Solid:

"Spike camp" activities will utilize fuel and other materials which contain hazardous substances, such as batteries, oil/grease, and pesticides (insect repellent). Human waste and wastewater will be generated by camp activities. Non-hazardous solid waste (trash) will be generated also.

B. Land Status:

The land in question is selected by Shumagin Native Corporation for conveyance. The State of Alaska has also top filed the land under section 906(e) of ANILCA. BLM's role is to manage the land for multiple use until such time the land is conveyed to the Corporation or the State of Alaska. If either entity reaches their full entitlement prior to conveyance of this land, the land would remain in BLM's management. Alaska U.S. Survey 11719 is a certified Native Allotment within this area and will be excluded from this permit.

C. Wildlife:

Moderate to high densities of caribou occur in the area depending on seasonal migration patterns. Predators such as wolves, wolverine, and brown bear frequent the area, but are highly mobile and would be encountered infrequently. Resident and migrant land birds nest and feed in shrub (alder and willow) habitats associated with riparian areas. Ptarmigan and land birds adapted to open habitats may be found on open tundra areas. Scattered tundra ponds provide habitat for nesting and migrating waterfowl, migrating sea ducks and diving ducks and shorebirds may frequent coastal areas during spring and fall migration.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Impacts of the Proposed Action:

1. Critical Elements:

a. Cultural Resources:

The activities performed under this permit should have no impact on cultural resources.

b. T&E Species:

The impact of the Proposed Action and Alternative on T&E plants and animals and their habitats has been evaluated in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Based on currently available information, the Proposed Action would not affect any T&E species or their habitats. Therefore, no consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considered necessary pursuant to Section 7 of the Act.

c. Wastes, Hazardous or Solid:

There is potential for harm to the environment associated with the use of oil and/or hazardous substances, and improper management of wastewater and trash generated by human activity in the “spike camps.”

2. Wildlife:

There is some potential for encounters with bears drawn into hunting camps by the presence of animal carcasses. This may increase the chance of the taking of bears for the defense of life or property, when bears may not otherwise be taken.

B. Impacts of the No Action Alternative:

If no guiding takes place, no additional impacts to the environment are expected. Natural processes and current influences will remain. There is a potential loss of recreation opportunities for people desiring access to areas that are otherwise inaccessible to them.

C. Cumulative Impacts:

Because the applicant’s actions on public lands are limited, localized, and expected to operate under special stipulations and conditions, it is not expected that there will be any long-term cumulative environmental impacts.

D. Mitigation Measures:

1. Waste, Hazardous or Solid:

All wastes should be managed in accordance with State and Federal laws and regulations. Pollution Prevention stipulations should be included with the Special Recreation Use Permit (Outfitter/Guide). Specifically, stipulations should address management of wastewater, hazardous and non-hazardous solid waste, and spill prevention and response.

2. Wildlife:

Hunting camps should be kept clean of food and curing meat. Carcasses should be removed from the camp as soon as possible to avoid attracting bears to the site.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A. List of Preparers:

Douglas Ballou - Lead Preparer, Recreation

Larry Beck - Environmental Protection Specialist

Donna Redding - Cultural, Historic, and Paleontological

Jeff Denton - Subsistence, Wildlife

Bruce Seppi - Wildlife, T&E, Riparian

Debbie Blank - Vegetation